

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BOMBAY 00705 041415 Z

52

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 RSR-01 SCI-06 AEC-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 NSF-04 ACDA-19 IO-12 GAC-01

SCEM-02 /135 W

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R 040730 Z APR 73

FM AMCONSUL BOMBAY

TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3739

AMCONSUL MADRAS

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOMBAY 0705

RQ. O.; 11652 GDS

TAGS: TGENKQ IN

SUBJECT: INDIA'S NUCLEAR POSITION

1. SUMMARY: AEC SCIREP POINTS OUT INDICATIONS GOI COULD VERY WELL BE WORKING ON NUCLEAR DEVICE TO DEMONSTRATE PEACEFUL APPLICATIONS IN NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE AND INDICATION ALSO THAT GOI IS LAYING GROUNDWORK TO MARKET LARGELY INDIGENOUS POWER REACTORS.

2. AEC REP BOMBAY DR. PINAJIAN (SINCE MID NOVEMBER 1972) HAS AT MY REQUEST GIVEN ME HIS INFORMAL AND PERSONAL EVALUATION OF INDIA'S NUCLEAR POSITION BASED ON SUBJECTIVE OBSERVATIONS AT VARIOUS LEVELS IN INDIA, BROAD EXTRAPOLATIONS BASED ON TECHNICAL PAPERS PRESENTED AT INDIAN SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS AS WELL AS IMPRESSION GATHERED FROM PUBLIC AND PERSONAL COMMENTS MADE BY MEMBER ATOMIC ENERGY COMMUNITY. REQUEST HIS COMMENTS, WHICH PERSONAL TO ME, BE CLOSELY HELD.

3. IT IS OPINION AL THAT INDIA'S DEPT OF ATOMIC ENERGY IS LAYING GROUNDWORK FOR SALE OF LARGELY INGENOUS ATOMIC

REACTORS (200 MWE) AND B) THAT GOI MAY WELL HAVE DECIDED TO
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PAGE 02 BOMBAY 00705 041415 Z

DEMONSTRATE ITS
NUCLEAR CAPABILITY BY EXPLOITING PEACEFUL APPLICATION M A
NUCLEAR DEVICE. IN HIS JUDGEMENT THIS WOULD BE FULLY WITHIN
CAPABILITIES OF GOI TO ACCOMPLISH IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND
INDICATIONS AVAILABLE IT COULD SUGGEST THAT GOI MAY BE CURRENTLY
WORKING TO THIS END.

4. FOLLOWING ARE SOME OF THE BASES THAT HE CITES AS HAVING
GIVEN RISE TO HIS IMPRESSION.

A. DESPITE HIS EXCELLENT CREDENTIALS AND CONTACTS HERE
DATING FROM OAK RIDGE, HIS PROPOSALS TO CARRY ON EXPERIMENTAL
WORK AT BHABHA ATOMIC RESEARCH CENTRE(BARC) AT TROMBAY AND
TATA INSTITUTE OF FUNDAMENTAL RESEARCH(TIFR) HAVE BEEN REBUFFED
BY GOI DIRECTORS (DR RAMANNA AT TROMBAY AND PROF MENON AT
TIFR.) THIS DESPITE FACT THAT IN AGREEMENT SIGNED BY DR.
SARABHAL, THEN CHAIRMAN AEC, AND USAEC COMMISSIONER RAMEY, DR
PINAJIAN WAS BEING MADE AVAILABLE AS AN EXPERT IN AREA OF
PRODUCTION OF HIGH PURITY RADIONUCLIDES. PRESENT AEC CHAIRMAN
SETHNA INITIALLY SUGGESTED THAT PINAJIAN GO TO WORK AT
BARC IMMEDIATELY. RAMANNA, HOWEVER AFTER AVOIDING PINAJIAN
UNTIL SETHNA INTERVENED AND PERSONALLY REQUESTED APPOINTMENT
FINALLY TOLD HIM THAT IT WOULD BE IMPRACTICAL FOR HIM TO WORK WITH
ISOTOPES DIVISION SINCE IT WOULD " REQUIRE PERMISSION FROM THE
CENTRE". RAMANNA ENDED BY SUGGESTING PINAJIAN SHOULD REALLY
WORK AT TIFR. PINAJIAN HAS BEEN TRYING TO SEE MENON WHO HEAD
TIFR SINCE ARRIVAL ON BOMBAY AND WITHOUT SUCCESS. MOREOVER PROF
THOSAR OF MENON' S STAFF REQUESTED LAST NOVEMBER THAT HE BE GIVEN
" PERMISSION TO INITIATE A PROGRAM OF INVESTIGATION WITH DR.
PINAJIAN, A RECOGNIZED EXPERT IN CERTAIN AREAS OF INTERNAL
CONVERSION SPECTROSCOPY". MONTHS HAVE PASSED AND NEITHER
THOSAR NOR PINAJIAN HAS HEARD ANYTHING FURTHER ON THIS DESPITE
PRODDING. CONSIDER FOREGOING SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE
BARC AND TIFR WOULD BE PRINCIPAL ORGANIZATION INVOLVED IN ANYP
MOVE TOWARD DEVELOPMENT OF A NUCLEAR DEVICE. ADDITIONALLY
PINAJIAN HAS HAD INCREASING DIFFICULTY IN SEEING SETHNA (HAS NOT
SEEN SINCE FEB ALTHOUGH HAS REQUESTED APPOINTMENT ON NUMBER
OF OCCASIONS.)

B. DESPITE CHAIRMAN SETHNA ' S STATEMENT THAT TROMBAY
" WIDE OPEN AND WE HAVE NO SECRETS" PINAJIAN CONTACTS
WITH PERSONNEL WORKING THERE (AND HE HAS A NUMBER OF
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PAGE 03 BOMBAY 00705 041415 Z

EXCELLENT CONTACTS WHO VALUE HIS ADVICE) DO NOT BEAR THIS OUT.

HIS CONTACTS SUGGEST THAT OUTSIDERS WORKING AT TROMBAY ARE NOT FREE TO ROAM AROUND. IN FACT FRIENDLY SOURCES ARE UNABLE TO TELL HIM WHO IS WORKING ON A PARTICULAR PROJECT AND WHAT IS BEING DONE.

C. PINAJIAN SATISFIED FROM ALL INDICATIONS AVAILABLE TO HIM INDIANS ARE DOING EXTENSIVE WORK IN FIELD OF PLUTONIUM. HE RECOGNIZES OF COURSE STRONG BASE FOR PLUTONIUM WORK IS ALSO NECESSARY FOR UTILIZATION OF PLUTONIUM IN DAE BREEDER REACTOR PROGRAM.

D. DAE HAS PLUTONIUM PROCESSING PLANT AT TROMBAY ANOTHER PLANT AT TARAPUR (SAFEGUARDS APPLY HERE TO REACTORS ONLY) AND ADDITIONAL PLANTS AT MADRAS. THE CIRCUS REACTORS AT TROMBAY HAVE BEEN OPERATING SEVERAL YEARS WITH NO CONTROL OVER DISPOSITION PLUTONIUM PRODUCTION FROM REACTOR. HZLHOTES, AS WELL, TARAPUR SENDING USED US FUEL ELEMENTS TO US RATHER THAN TREAT TARAPUR TROMBAY OR HYFURABAD WHICH COULD SUGGEST RELUCTANCE TO SEE SAFEGUARDS APPLIED.

THIS ALSO SUGGESTED TO PINAJIAN BYJP
DR , MWDKONDAL
PROJECT DIRECTOR NUCLEAR FUEL COMPLEX
HYDERABAD.

5. COMMENT: FORGOING SUBJECTIVE AND IMPRESSIONISTIC AND MUST BE TREATED AS SUCH. I CAN VERIFY THAT KEY MEN IN INDIA'S ATOMIC ENERGY HIERARCHY ARE APPARENTLY RELUCTANT TO ALLOW PINAJIAN TO BECOME INVOLVED IN ANY ACCESS TO THESE INSTITUTIONS. IN MY VIEW THEIR RELUCTANCE DERIVES FROM THEIR CONCERN THAT PINAJIAN KNOWLEDGEABLE AND COULD FIND OUT MORE THAN THEY MIGHT LIKE THAT HE SHOULD. THEY PROBABLY FEAR THAT WE MAY BE USING HIM OBSERVE THEIR ACTIVITIES IN NUCLEAR FIELD.

6. AS AURA OF INDO- PAK VICTORY AND 1970/72 ELECTORAL SUCCESSES DIM AND AS PUBLIC DISENCHANTMENT WITH PM AND GOI MOUNT REFLECTING INCREASED ECONOMIC DISTRESS IT OCCURS TO US IN BOMBAY THAT IN ADDITION USUAL SCAPEGOATS, " DEMONSTRATION" OF A NUCLEAR DEVICE FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES IN NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE
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PAGE 04 BOMBAY 00705 041415 Z

COULD GIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL SHOT IN ARM TO SAGGING PM AND CONGRESS IMAGE AS WELL SUPPORT INDIA'S DESIRE ATTAIN GREATER RECOGNITION MAJOR POWER STATUS.
BANE

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